

considerable value in certain selected patients. In our experience, this evaluation is aided by the finding of dissociation of hemodynamic function from the mechanical properties of the ventricle. Also, asynchrony of contraction is an important component of depressed pump function and reduced cardiac output immediately following acute myocardial infarction. It is hypothesized that in some instances the ineffectiveness of certain positive inotropic agents in the treatment of cardiogenic shock might be the result of worsening of this disorderly sequence of ventricular contraction despite improvement of depressed contractility.

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A Policy on Strikes

THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES of the California Medical Association has adopted a significant and timely statement with respect to strike activities by physicians. (The statement appears in full in the box opposite.) It declares that the CMA "believes that abandonment of patients through a concerted denial of service by physicians (strike) is an unacceptable method of solving problems or differences," and goes on to emphasize the importance of reason, reasonableness and cooperation in achieving desired objectives. The statement is significant because it reaffirms a time honored value system which places a physician's service to humanity somewhat above such things as hours of work, remuneration and fringe benefits, while at the same time holding that these should be fair and equitable. The statement is timely in that it calls for a return to reason and reasonableness at a moment when the use of power tactics in health

care is increasing and seems likely to increase considerably more.

The 1970s are certain to be a period of enormous pressures in health care. The root of the evil lies in the disparity between unrealistic expectations of health care services on the one hand and unrealistic assumptions with respect to resources for their delivery on the other. A situation exists which is poorly understood and which is impossible of immediate solution. In such circumstances there is a danger that irrationality will replace reason and that power tactics will be employed in certainly futile and potentially devastating efforts to overcome the real and imagined

A Position on "Strike" Activities

A policy statement on the California Medical Association's position on "strike" activities was adopted by the House of Delegates at its meeting March 11, 1970. The statement follows:

"The physicians of California have one major responsibility and duty: the provision of medical care of the highest quality to all persons. The California Medical Association believes that abandonment of patients through a concerted denial of service by physicians (strike) is an unacceptable method of solving problems or differences.

"The California Medical Association further believes all members of the health team should receive reasonable and fair compensation, benefits and privileges for their services. These rewards would be based, primarily, on education and training, experience, responsibilities and competence.

"The California Medical Association urges that methods be sought by all members of the health team, including those administrative and political agencies which use the services of health workers, to achieve their desired objectives in an equitable, professional manner, protective of the health of all, without resorting to denial of service.

"The California Medical Association will continue to cooperate with the hospitals of California and with professional organizations representing members of the health care team, for the purpose of improving the quality and increasing the availability of health manpower personnel through (a) improving recruitment techniques; (b) providing more educational and training opportunities; and (c) urging adequate compensation of personnel in terms of their education, experience, and degree of responsibility and competence in health care."

injustices inherent in the impossible situation. It makes no difference whether the power tactics are used by government, by third party payers or by health professionals. The ultimate result of their use is always reduction in efficiency and an increase in the real cost of delivering health care services. Seldom is the patient's or public's interest served by such tactics, and where reason prevails they should not be necessary.

In retrospect many would say that the government was irrational when it decided to pour billions of dollars into providing payments for additional health care services without making parallel provision for the additional resources needed. It has been frustrating to those within and without government to find the cost of these services has risen although reason tells us there could have been no other result. To try to control the rising health care costs, further irrational acts by government and others are clearly impending, and these will no doubt further reduce efficiency and further curtail what few incentives remain for a physician to expand his services. The inevitable result will be further to increase the real cost of the services rendered and also the disparity between expectations and resources which is after all the root cause of the problem. Power tactics, whether used by government, nurses, interns and residents or others are as irrational in health care as indeed they are elsewhere in human relations where the common

good, and perhaps even the survival, of all is at stake.

The CMA action might well have been to climb on this power bandwagon. But it was not. Instead the statement of the House calls for the greater use of reason and statesmanship. It places the health and health care of patients and the public a notch or two above the battlefield of power tactics and power politics in health care. It recognizes the frustrations, the problems and the differences but holds that these can be better resolved with reason and reasonableness than with force in the interest of the common good. This is a challenge not only to physicians, nurses and other health professionals but to society itself and its government.

Were the alternative philosophy to prevail, or indeed to come about at some future time, and if doctors were really to decide to hang together and to hang tough enough, one suspects they could get just about anything they wanted from government and the public. But this is not the present attitude of the great majority of the House of Delegates or of practicing physicians, and it is in the interest of all concerned that the statement of the House be commended and supported. If reason can become the order of the day, it will in the long run result in better and less costly medical care and a fair shake for everyone including all the health professionals. The House is to be commended for so rational and forthright a stand.